

# Millions more to lose homes

## Gov't continues to bail out bankers, not homeowners

## Moratorium on foreclosures needed now more than ever

By Jerry Goldberg

Testimony at a hearing on Dec. 8 by the U.S. House Committee on Financial Services documented how the foreclosure crisis is getting worse.

Laurie Goodman, senior managing director at Amherst Securities, a leading broker/dealer specializing in trading mortgage-backed securities, testified that in the third quarter of 2009, 14.1 percent of borrowers — or 7.9 million homeowners — did not make their mortgage payments. She estimated that 7 million of these 7.9 million homeowners will lose their homes. (www.house.gov)

Julie Gordon from the Center for Responsible Lending testified that the effects of high unemployment and defaults in exotic Alt-A and option mortgages will add millions of homeowners to this total. She estimated that by the time this crisis abates as many as 13 million families will have lost their homes. In addition, tens of millions of other homes are suffering a decrease in property values totaling hundreds of billions of dollars in lost wealth, costing states and localities enormous losses in tax revenues used to pay for government services.

Gordon testified how the Obama administration's Home Affordable Modification Program has fallen far short of its promise to help 3 million to 4 million homeowners with loan modifications. After nine months of operation, only approximately 650,000 homeowners are now in a trial modification. However, only a fraction of those in trial modifications have received a permanent loan modification. In addition, HAMP has no provisions for principal reductions and offers no help whatsoever for the unemployed who cannot pay their loans due to the loss of their job.

### Government bank bailout continues

How is it that bank profits are rising while foreclosures grow exponentially? The reason is that the government is increasingly guaranteeing bank losses due to foreclosures by reimbursing the lenders at full value for overvalued mortgages when there are defaults. This "silent bailout" continues every day even as the banks make a show of returning their Troubled Asset Relief Program funds so they can go back to paying \$30-million executive bonuses.

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, which own or guarantee about half of the country's mortgages, were taken over by the government in July 2008. The Treasury Department committed \$400 billion in taxpayer money to fund the takeover initially. Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac are burning so much cash bailing out the lenders — \$15 billion by Fannie Mae in November alone — that the Treasury is considering an infusion of another \$400 billion in taxpayer funds into these entities. (New York Times, Dec. 17) Coupled with funds from the AIG and GMAC bailouts, which are being utilized to pay off lenders on foreclosed properties, it is estimated the total government lifeline to the banks to cover their losses from foreclosures could rise to \$1 trillion.

The effect of this continued bailout to the banks is that it actually discourages lenders from reducing the principal on mortgages whose values they inflated through their predatory lending practices. This is because they know the government will pay them full value when the borrowers default.

Goodman testified to Congress that in the second quarter of 2009, 30.5 percent of mortgage loans in bank portfolios received a principal reduction as part of a modification. However, the corresponding number for loans guaranteed by the government through Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, Federal Housing Administration, etc., was zero.

Incredibly, while the current situation cries out for a moratorium on foreclosures and fundamental reductions in loan principals, the Obama administration and Congress have been silent in implementing these measures and have not enforced already-passed legislation which could do so.

For example, the Helping Families Stay in Their Homes Act, passed on May 20, states that it is the sense of Congress that there should be a moratorium on foreclosures until

the Treasury Department certifies that HAMP has been implemented. Clearly, the statistics cited above and testified to at the congressional hearing demonstrate that HAMP has not been fully implemented. Yet Congress and President Barack Obama have not enforced this law and implemented a moratorium.

In addition, the Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac bailout bill, the Home Economic Recovery Act passed in July 2008, provides for loan modifications and workout agreements by servicers when the net value would be greater than the value of the home in foreclosure. Why isn't the government ordering that banks holding Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac loans reduce the principal on those loans to their real value? Instead, they are paying lenders the inflated mortgage loan amount, and then selling the homes for less than half that amount, with the taxpayers picking up the difference.

The fight against foreclosures and evictions and against the banks and government that continue to bail them out will be a critical part of the fight for jobs and economic justice as the struggle unfolds in the coming months. □

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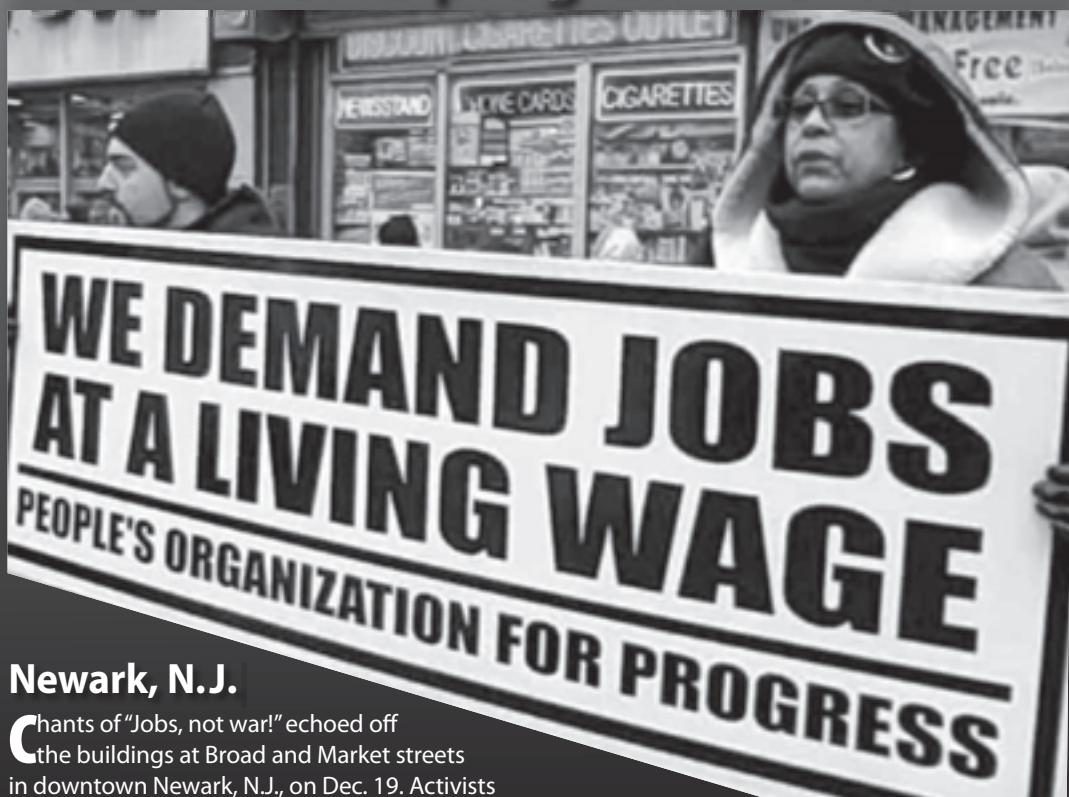
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## Public works program NOW!



WW PHOTO: MIKE ELENFELDT

### Newark, N.J.

Chants of "Jobs, not war!" echoed off the buildings at Broad and Market streets in downtown Newark, N.J., on Dec. 19. Activists

withstood freezing cold to demand a massive public works program with direct government employment at prevailing wages. In the face of 16 percent unemployment in the Black community (well over 20 percent when part-time and discouraged workers are included), the marchers said a jobs program should "cut class size in half in our schools, provide low-cost housing for all, dramatically expand mass transit, develop and build cheap, clean, safe energy," and much more.

Organizers, led by the People's Organization for Progress and the New Jersey May 1st Coalition, said the program should be paid for "by ending

the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and by taxing the rich and the corporations who created the crisis."

Rally flyers emphasized that the jobs program must include "all who live here, immigrant and native, prison record or no prison record." It read: "The monopoly capitalist system, led by U.S. imperialism, drives immigrants from their homelands; oppresses and exploits African Americans and pits us against each other in a downward spiral of poverty and oppression." The closing demands were: No one denied work; legalization for all; united we stand — divided we fall; we demand jobs for all!

— Dee Knight

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MARCH 4

# National protest to defend education

By Larry Hales

On March 4, students and workers from all around the country will take action to defend education against increased privatization of K-12 schools and budget cuts, layoffs, furloughs and tuition increases at the college and university level — especially the public institutions.

Workers and students have shouldered the brunt of the capitalist crisis, while bankers and some corporations have been given hundreds of billions of dollars of public monies to bail them out of a crisis that was created by the capitalist system.

Young people in particular are faced with a grim future, one where well-paying jobs with benefits are becoming scarcer, where the educational system is being increasingly privatized and teachers’ unions weakened, and where the curriculum is being designed to prepare future generations for worldwide competition for low-wage jobs.

Colleges and universities are getting further out of reach for many, and those who are able to attend must mortgage their futures.

It is the current political climate, on top of drastic measures taken by state governments across the country, that helped give birth to the idea of having a national day of action.

At their Oct. 4 conference, California students and faculty, teachers and other workers first called for March 4 to be a statewide day of action.

California students have taken bold action, occupying a number of universities — University of California, Berkeley and San Francisco State, to name only two. The action and energy from California have piqued the inter-

## K-12 students protest outrageous fare hike



WW PHOTO: TONY MURPHY

Chanting “MTA, we won’t pay!” hundreds of youth protested on Dec. 21 at the Metropolitan Transit Authority headquarters in New York City. Signs at this Day of Outrage protest read, “Save the Students, not the Bankers.”

The MTA has suggested balancing their budget problems on the backs of K-12 students by discontinuing a program that provides free MetroCards for more than 500,000 city students to ride the subways and buses to school.

Unlike students in many school districts throughout the country, who ride school buses, students in New York rely on public transportation to get to and from school. At current rates, parents would be forced to pay upward of \$1,000 per child per year for a monthly MetroCard.

— LeiLani Dowell

est of many across the country, who then reached out to California students to make the statewide day of action a national day.

In mid-December the California Coordinating Committee and activists, students, educators and other workers from across the country released complementary statements agitating for a March 4 National Day of Action.

The ad hoc group’s statement reads: “As people throughout the country struggle under the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, public education from pre-K to higher and adult education is threatened by budget cuts, layoffs, privatization, tuition and fee increases, and other attacks. Budget cuts degrade the quality of public education by decreasing student services and increasing class size, while tuition hikes and layoffs force the cost of the recession onto students and teachers and off the financial institutions that caused the recession in the first place.

“Non-unionized charter schools threaten to divide, weaken and privatize the public school system and damage teachers’ unions, which are needed now more than ever. More and more students are going deep into debt to finance their education, while high unemployment forces many students and youth to join the military to receive a higher education. In addition, all of the attacks described above have hit working people and people of color the hardest.

“In California, students, teachers, workers, parents, and faculty have taken action against these attacks. They took to the streets in a one-day strike on Sept. 24, organized strikes and actions across the state during the UC Board of Regents meeting from Nov. 18-20, and have called for a statewide day of action on March 4. These actions have created a broad mass movement in California, drawing in students from all over the state to create a powerful struggle.

“As the effects of the economic crisis continue to spread into the education system nationally, it’s time to join our voices with students and workers in California and draw inspiration from their example.

“We support each group or coalition organizing in the manner and for the duration of their choosing. In solidarity with those in California, we the below-signed individuals and organizations call on students, teachers, workers, parents, faculty, and staff across the country to join together on March 4 to Take a Stand for Education!”

Planning for the March 4 National Day of Action has already begun in California, New York, Illinois, Ohio, Texas, Georgia, Alabama, Massachusetts, Maryland, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Colorado, Connecticut and North Carolina. It will no doubt grow.

FIST (Fight Imperialism, Stand Together) and many student groups, community organizations, socialist parties and unions have begun planning and organizing for what could be a resurgence of a national student movement at a time when workers’ organizations and anti-war and community groups are becoming enraged at the loss of jobs, continuing imperialist war and plunder, racism and police brutality, attacks against immigrant workers, and all the other ills of U.S. capitalist society.

*Hales is a national leader of FIST. Go to [www.defendededucation.org](http://www.defendededucation.org) or [www.tiny.cc/TgYNe](http://www.tiny.cc/TgYNe) to endorse the call for the March 4 National Day of Action.*

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Notice to our readers

Due to our annual holiday schedule, we will be skipping one issue of WW. The next WW will be dated Jan. 14. Check [workers.org](http://workers.org) for updates.

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Vol. 51, No. 48 • Dec. 31, 2009

Closing date: Dec. 22, 2009

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org).

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at [www.workers.org/email.php](http://www.workers.org/email.php).

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.

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## CLEVELAND

# Protesters demand: ‘Recognize us as being human’

By Sharon Danann

On Dec. 19, despite snow, more than 40 protesters gathered at the home of Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson picketing, chanting and singing “We Shall Not Be Moved!” The rally was called by the Imperial Women, a diverse group of women formed to press for a militant response in the wake of the October discovery of 11 bodies of Black women in Anthony Sowell’s home on Imperial Avenue on Cleveland’s east side.

The Imperial Women had met with the mayor’s representative in early November with several demands. They called for holding high-ranking officials accountable for lack of attention to many reports filed with police that could have prevented additional murders. They also called for the development of a truly responsive missing persons system for adults.

Mayor Jackson gave no indication of any response until the Imperial Women’s press release announced a rally at his house. The following day he appointed a commission of three women to research the best policies for handling missing persons and sexual assault cases. The commission will not address any malfeasance related to the Sowell case.

The Imperial Women are not silenced by the mayor’s first step. In fact, they are

also bringing attention to another side of the racist, sexist scorn revealed by the deaths on Imperial Avenue: the brutality that the police feel free to unleash on members of the Black community, including Black women.

At the Dec. 19 rally at the mayor’s house, Timothy Walker held the crowd spellbound in sorrow and rage as he recounted how, last April, cops whom he had invited into his home to “mediate” a situation had beaten his daughter, Rebecca Whitby, until she was bleeding all over her body. They had pounded on her until she vomited.

While she was in the police car, Walker explained, cops had used a Taser on her until she was unconscious and having seizures, as they spewed vile invective at her, sprinkled liberally with the n-word. Later, apparently to stifle Whitby’s ability to tell the nurses how she got the injuries, the police convinced the hospital staff to inject her with the powerful psychotropic drug Geodon.

Walker stressed, “This was a brutal act that truly needs to be addressed under the rights of humanity. Racism should not be an option when you have taken an oath to protect and serve.”

Ironically, it is Whitby who is now facing felony charges. She is being held responsible for causing bruises on the el-

Outside Mayor Jackson’s house.

WW PHOTO: CALEB MAUPIN

bows that the police were slamming into her and for spitting on them — as if she vomited deliberately — while she was being beaten. Her mother, also named Rebecca Whitby, is also facing charges for trying to protect her daughter. When they do appear in court, there will be community support, as organizing is already in progress to fill the courtroom.

Signs at the rally protested the ongoing harassment of Kathy Wray Coleman. A founder of the Imperial Women, Coleman received a threatening phone call saying that there was a warrant for her arrest for a traffic violation, and pressuring her to call off the rally at the mayor’s house. The Imperial Women responded swiftly by e-mailing hundreds of contacts to spread the word that the rally would not be cancelled.

This protest had widespread community support. Speakers and participants represented Stop Targeting Ohio’s Poor; the Lucasville Uprising Freedom Net-



work; The People for the Imperial Act; the New Black Panther Party for Self Defense — Cleveland; Survivor/Victims of Tragedy; the Bail Out the People Movement — Cleveland; Black on Black Crime, Inc.; Books2Prisoners; and the Cleveland Jericho Movement.

Marva Patterson, the aunt of the beaten Rebecca Whitby and a leader of the Imperial Women, said, “It’s time for citizens to mobilize. We’re telling the powers that be: ‘Enough is enough!’ We want to be recognized as being human.” □

## Long overdue step toward justice: Indictments in immigrant beating death

By Betsey Piette

On Dec. 15, federal prosecutors charged a police chief and two officers with orchestrating a cover-up in the racially motivated fatal beating of 25-year-old Luis Ramírez, a Mexican immigrant, by white teenagers in Shenandoah, Pa.

The indictment accused Police Chief Matthew Nestor, Lt. William Moyer and Patrolman Jason Hayes of conspiracy to obstruct justice, altering evidence, wit-

ness tampering and lying to the FBI in the hate crime case against two popular high school football players.

The federal indictment also charged Derrick Donchak and Brandon Piekarsky, former Shenandoah High School athletes, with a federal hate crime in the beating death of Ramírez in July 2008. Donchak was also charged with conspiring with police in the cover-up and giving false statements to the police.

A state court had previously charged

Donchak and Piekarsky with beating Ramírez to death. State prosecutors pressed ethnic intimidation charges against the two, who yelled racial epithets at Ramírez while Piekarsky gripped a piece of metal to give his punches more power.

In May, despite evidence of a hate-driven attack, a racist all-white jury acquitted Piekarsky of charges of third-degree murder of Ramírez, Donchak of aggravated assault and both men of ethnic intimidation. The two were found guilty and sentenced

to six to 23 months in prison for only simple assault and underage drinking. Piekarsky was scheduled to be released from prison on Dec. 24.

A third teen, Colin Walsh, who faced state court charges in Ramírez’s death, pled guilty in federal court to violating Ramírez’s civil rights. He testified against Donchak and Piekarsky at their trial last spring.

The federal indictment states that the

*Continued on page 10*

## Houston actions support immigrant workers

By Gloria Rubac  
Houston

Houstonians took to the streets for several days in mid-December in strong actions to support immigrant rights and immigration reform.

On Dec. 16, U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez introduced immigration reform legislation in Congress. Many organizations are meeting with their constituencies to strategize about how to persuade Congress to pass the legislation; they are calling it long overdue. Lobbying has begun, and meetings with congressional representatives are being planned.

On Dec. 17, a mobilization billed as “Houston We Can’t Wait! Make Your Voice Heard!” was held in a constant rain at the Mickey Leland Federal Building. More than 75 people braved the unusually cold weather to march and call for “Immigration reform now!”

Students, religious leaders, immigrants, trade unionists and activists spoke to the media and chanted the following demands: “No more! No more raids. No more fami-



Houston protest, Dec. 18.

PHOTO: STEPHANIE CABALLERO

lies being split. No more children without a secure future. No more time. The time for immigration reform is now!”

The spirited action was called by CRECEN (Centros de Recursos Centroamericanos), America Para Todos, FIEL (Familias Inmigrantes y Estudiantes en la Lucha), Pastores en Accion, and Alianza Mexicana por Una Reforma.

On Dec. 18, the International Day of the Migrant, Students for a Democratic Society at the University of Houston organized a militant demonstration at the Houston Processing Center where immigrants are detained. They protested the Immigration

and Customs Enforcement raids on Dec. 2 of two Mambo’s restaurants and the detention of 33 restaurant workers, as part of calling for immigrants’ rights.

Under heavy scrutiny by both Houston cops and ICE agents, dozens of activists chanted: “What do we want? Immigrant rights! How do we get it? Melt the ICE!” “Inmigrantes, escucha, estamos en su lucha” and “Immigration is not a crime. Why are people doing time?”

After activists from SDS and the International Action Center spoke, three women sang songs from the 1960s’ Civil Rights Movement, which they had translated

into Spanish. They were Monica from Ecuador, Amelia from Mexico and Laura Boston of the Houston Interfaith Workers Justice Center. Some of the verses were re-written to reflect the issues of the immigrant rights movement.

“When we traveled across the South a few years ago on an Immigrant Freedom Ride, we stayed in houses of people involved in the movement in the 1960s in Selma, Jackson, Montgomery and Atlanta,” Maria Jimenez explained to Workers World. “It was so moving to hear of their courageous battles for African Americans. We learned so much from them. So we translated their songs so we could use them in our struggle.”

The Houston Processing Center, which houses more than 900 prisoners, was the first private prison in the United States; it is owned by Corrections Corporations of America. According to CCA’s Web page, CCA’s revenues in the first quarter of 2009 were more than \$404 million. Today private companies operate dozens of detention centers for immigrants all across the country. □



## Sickness & struggle

# The impact of technology on health delivery and access

By David Hoskins

The past decade has seen a flurry of promising breakthroughs in medicine. The HPV vaccine, targeted cancer therapy, human genome mapping, natural orifice surgery, and drug-eluting stents are among the biggest breakthroughs of the 21st century. Many of these developments hold the potential to prolong and improve life.

An examination of Center for Disease Control statistics reveals a steady increase in life expectancy for the U.S. population since the start of the 20th century. In 1900, the average life expectancy at birth was a mere 47 years. By 1950, this had dramatically increased to just over 68 years. As of 2005, life expectancy had increased to almost 78 years.

Prior advances in medical science and technology are responsible for this 30-year increase in life expectancy. The discovery and use of penicillin to cure life-threatening infections, the development of a polio vaccine and the first successful organ transplant all lent themselves to a drastic improvement in life expectancy throughout the 20th century.

### Technology and health care access

Another trend has emerged alongside this rapid increase in life expectancy. The 20th century advances in medical science and technology have corresponded to the rise of insurance companies as an intermediary between the doctor and the patient.

Prior to 1920 the rudimentary state of medical technology meant that most patients were treated in their homes and medical expenditures were often negligible. According to Melissa Thomasson, associate professor of economics at Miami University, lost wages due to sickness were four times greater than the costs associated with treating the illness. As a result, households preferred to purchase “sickness” insurance similar to today’s disability insurance to provide income in the event of an illness.

The U.S. population shifted from rural areas to urban centers at the same time that advances in medical technology and standardized requirements for medical licensure contributed to the growing ac-

ceptance of medicine as a science. This in turn led to the development of hospitals as treatment centers and encouraged the sick to seek out physicians and hospitals regularly. By the end of the 1920s, the cost of medical care began to increase in response to this demand for greater amounts of treatment.

In 1929, a group of Dallas teachers contracted with Baylor University Hospital to provide 21 days of hospitalization for a fixed rate of \$6.00. Hospital plans such as these spread and eventually combined at the encouragement of the American Hospital Association under the name Blue Cross.

Blue Shield insurance for physician services developed a little later than Blue Cross and was in part a response by physicians worried that hospitals would encroach on their autonomy by providing insurance for physician services. Blue Shield was also developed by physicians to stave off demands for national health insurance.

It is worth noting that neither Blue Cross nor Blue Shield was developed with the intention of expanding access to health care. Both were initially designed as rudimentary forms of insurance for hospitals and physicians to recoup the full costs for the services they provide — profits and all.

### Unions fight for expanded insurance coverage

Health insurance is actually a barrier to health care access when left to the machinations of the “free” market without the intervention of workers. Health insurance is a means of regulating access to doctors and medicine. Labor unions have struggled at the bargaining table for expanded employer-paid insurance coverage despite the inherent tendency of private health insurance to ration health care.

Organized labor had been a vigorous supporter of President Harry Truman’s proposal for a system of national health insurance starting in 1945 when the plan was first announced to Congress. By the end of the 1940s, due to opposition by a ferocious right wing, which included the American Medical Association, the plan was dead despite strong support from a

coalition of farmers and workers led in part by the American Federation of Labor and the National Farmers Union.

After the defeat of universal health care legislation, the labor movement turned its attention to expanding the system of workplace-based private insurance coverage. In 1949, the National Labor Relations Board ruled in the dispute between Inland Steel Co. and the United Steelworkers Union that the term “wages” included insurance benefits. Labor unions were able to utilize this ruling in their fight to win insurance coverage for their members.

Commercial insurance companies entered the market following the success of Blue Cross and Blue Shield. By 1952, commercial companies surpassed the combined market share of the ostensibly non-profit “Blues.” Due to the success of union campaigns, tens of millions of workers and their family members gained access to private health insurance.

However, the employer-based system of private health insurance was always insufficient. Millions of workers and oppressed people inside the U.S. have always lacked health insurance and as a result, they have been denied adequate medical care.

The impact of the scientific-technological revolution and the corresponding erosion of the U.S. manufacturing base have contributed to a growing crisis in the trade unions that began in the late 1970s.

In 1948, at the start of the full push by unions to negotiate private insurance coverage as a standard work benefit, more than 31 percent of the workforce was unionized. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that there were 16.1 million union workers in 2008. This amounts to 12.4 percent of the employed workforce.

These factors have eroded much of the extensive employer-based system of private health insurance won by unions. The result has been a crisis in health care that is only exacerbated by the current economic crisis. This health care crisis is marked by the 50 million individuals living inside the U.S. who lack health insurance and the 25 million who are underinsured.

*Next: The fight for real, quality health reform (last in series)*

## Grocery workers win anti-racist suits

Albertson’s grocery chain will pay \$8.9 million to 168 former and current Black and Latino/a workers at its warehouse distribution center in suburban Denver who were subjected to racist taunts and had to use a restroom covered in racist graffiti, including drawings of swastikas and lynchings. Not only did supervisors know about the harassment, they participated in it. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission brought three suits that led to this settlement, which will give about \$53,000 to each worker. (New York Times, Dec. 16)

## Big win for Fla. tomato workers

The top U.S. food and support services company, Compass Group, signed an agreement with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers this fall that gives a raise to Florida tomato harvesters, mostly Latino/a and Haitian immigrants. Compass will pay an additional 1.5 cents per pound for the 10.5 million pounds of tomatoes it buys annually. One cent will pass directly to the workers. This agreement boosts workers’ wages from 50 cents for a 32-pound bucket to 82 cents per bucket, a 64 percent increase. Compass also agreed to purchase tomatoes only from growers and suppliers willing to meet standards set out in the code of conduct contained in the CIW agreement. Raking in \$9 billion in revenue in 2008, Compass has more than 10,000 accounts with schools, corporate offices, hospitals and cultural centers. The agreement applies to all its operating companies, which could have far-reaching impact on the fight for justice in the tomato fields. The deal is already bearing fruit. East Coast Growers and Packers, the third-largest tomato grower in Florida, has already agreed to Compass’ terms. The campaign for justice for tomato workers has been gaining momentum now that Taco Bell and its corporate owner Yum! Brands, McDonald’s, Burger King, Subway, Chipotle and Whole Foods have signed hard-won agreements with CIW. (www.ciw.org)

## N.Y. state trans workers gain bias protection

New York Gov. David A. Patterson signed an executive order Dec. 16 extending anti-discrimination protections to

## New pension plan

# ‘Redistribution of wealth’ attacks NY workers

Special to Workers World  
New York

The day after he went to Wall Street to say that bankers’ salaries are “rather low,” Gov. David Paterson signed a bill Dec. 10 taking \$30 to \$50 billion away from the pensions of new state and municipal

hires. This is the biggest change to New York’s pension system in 25 years.

Paterson claimed the state’s current fiscal crisis required this new pension scheme, but it won’t save any money for 10 years.

Although the new pension system, called Tier V, does not apply to municipal workers in New York City, billionaire

Mayor Michael Bloomberg issued statements supporting it and indicating he wants to apply a similar plan.

New York’s constitution and the state’s Taylor Law have two clauses about pensions that are supposed to affect what politicians and the unions representing public workers can do. The constitution prohib-

its pensions of current public employees from being “diminished or impaired.” The Taylor Law removes pensions as a subject for collective bargaining between public employers and the unions representing their workers.

As a practical matter, however, politicians do not change pension plans without the unions involved granting their consent. Some major unions representing state workers — the Public Employees Federation and the Civil Service Employees Union — under the threat of major layoffs and reopening their contracts, assented to Paterson’s Tier V. But NYSUT, a large confederation of all the education unions in New York, plus two of its higher education affiliates — the Professional Staff Congress and United University Professions — put up a sharp and stubborn resistance.

The PSC passed a resolution in June, when Paterson’s proposal first surfaced, pointing out that “a reduction in the pen-

*Continued on page 5*



“They say gentrify, we say unify!” shouted protesters on Dec. 16 in East Harlem, New York City, as four groups — Community Voices Heard, Community Board 11, Tenants and Neighbors and Picture The Homeless — marched through the housing projects of mostly Black and Latino/a neighborhoods. “Demands for affordable housing grow,” as PTH organizer, Maria, explained at the rally following the march. Maria, who is homeless, stated, “Thousands of the poor have been forced out of their homes.”

The protest called for unity in this struggle for housing for all working-class and oppressed people. As the militant action showed, the 600 stalled or largely empty NYC luxury apartments may soon face a takeover by those who say that decent housing is a human right.

— Report and photo by Anne Pruden



## Picket Line

by Sue Davis

transgender state employees. A number of cities in the state — Albany, Buffalo, New York and Rochester — already include trans people in broad anti-bias coverage. Though this will apply only to employees at state agencies, it is a first step toward including gender identity and expression in anti-bias New York state law. Currently 12 states, the District of Columbia, and more than 100 cities and counties have broad laws prohibiting discrimination against trans people. (New York Times, Dec. 16)

### Labor college partners with Native college

The National Labor College signed an agreement with the College of Menominee Nation, an Indigenous college with two campuses in Wisconsin, reported [www.aflcio.blog](http://www.aflcio.blog) on Dec. 13. The agreement makes it easier for students attending the college to transfer up to 90 credits toward one of six labor studies majors at NLC. The NLC currently has more than 25 academic partnerships nationwide with community colleges and four-year college programs.

### Transport workers to get raises!

In August an arbitration court ruled that Transport Workers Union Local 100 members, who staged a heroic three-day strike in New York City in 2005, should get 11.3 percent raises in a new three-year contract. Also, a cap was put on the workers' health benefit contributions worth about 1 percent of wages. But, still wanting to punish the workers, the Metropolitan Transit Authority, with the backing of billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg, appealed the arbitration. Over the next three months Local 100 held a number of street actions, including a militant march over the Brooklyn Bridge, demanding the new contract, which was in line with those of other public employees. The week of Dec. 7 the court upheld the contract. Now the money just needs to show up in the workers' pockets! ☐

sion benefits of public employees is part of a larger attempt — that predates the current recession — to redistribute the wealth generated by working people by attacking the benefits of public employees." It correctly asserted that "pensions are deferred compensation for years of dedicated service to CUNY," the City University of New York.

The resolution went on to state that "the PSC supports organized labor's proud tradition of taking a firm stand against the erosion of benefits for working people, rejecting opportunistic attempts to use the current economic recession to continue the redistribution of wealth away from workers."

While the resolution recognized the right of PEF and the CSEU to bargain for the workers they represent, it opposed terms and conditions being imposed on unions that were not party to the negotiations and strongly asserted that the PSC would reject a Tier V being imposed on workers it would represent after they were hired.

The state Legislature did not impose Tier V on the PSC.

Paterson is not going to wait 10 years for the cuts in workers' pensions and compensation to start to take effect. He has announced that he is applying an across-the-board 10-percent reduction in state spending. This cut will primarily hit schools and local governments, and also property tax relief. Exactly how it will be carried out is unclear, but added to the cuts already made, it is going to make life harder for public workers and the people they serve. ☐

## Is this a recovery?

# Hidden unemployment, crisis in education funding

By **Abayomi Azikiwe**  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire  
Detroit

A Dec. 16 Detroit News article confirms what most working people in Detroit have been saying for some time: The official employment figures issued by the federal government do not give an accurate description of the depth of the economic crisis in the city. According to the article, the actual unemployment rate in Detroit is closer to 50 percent, rather than the nearly 28 percent reported over the last several months.

Detroit has been seriously affected by the economic crisis because of the large number of people who were employed in the automotive and steel industries. General Motors Corporation, which was one of the largest employers in the Detroit metropolitan area, has trimmed hundreds of thousands of jobs over the last two decades. The other two auto firms, Chrysler and Ford, have also eliminated tens of thousands of jobs in the last few years.

The massive elimination of jobs in these industries has had a tremendous impact on other sectors of the economy, including retail, health care, entertainment, culture, housing, education and public service. This ripple effect is clearly demonstrated in Detroit and the entire state of Michigan, where job cuts have been carried out on a broad level.

According to University of Michigan Professor George Fulton, who analyzes employment data for the state of Michigan, a broader definition of joblessness is needed to get a more objective view of the state's economic situation. In the official calculations of employment data, those who are working part-time, those who have become discouraged and are no longer actively seeking jobs, and people returning to school because of the economic situation are not factored into the overall rate of unemployment.

The article reports: "The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that for the year that ended in September, Michigan's official unemployment rate was 12.6 percent. Using the broadest definition of unemployment, the state unemployment rate was 20.9 percent, or 66 percent higher than the official rate. Since Detroit's official rate for October was 27 percent, that broader rate pushes the city's rate to as high as 44.8 percent."

#### Impact on education

Detroit has witnessed a reduction in enrollment of approximately 100,000 students over the last decade. Many of these youth left the city when their families moved to pursue employment. With the loss of students, it is inevitable that schools will be closed down and teachers, clerical workers, custodians, social workers and counselors will lose their jobs.

Another major contributing factor to the decline in enrollment in the public school system is the "charterization" of public education in Detroit and the surrounding communities. Over the last decade the notion that charter and private schools are inherently superior to public institutions has been advanced through the corporate media, private corporations and segments of both the Republican and Democratic parties.

Although there is no empirical scientific evidence proving that charter schools provide better curricula and get better results than their public counterparts — in fact, some studies suggest just the oppo-

site — the movement toward privatization of education is well underway. Even the Obama administration is firmly on record in support of charter schools and merit pay for teachers.

Both the expansion of charter schools and the policy of merit pay undermine unions, which are often characterized by the corporate media as bad for student achievement. The onus for good or bad academic performance in the public schools is often blamed on teachers and parents. Yet the drastic cutbacks in public education funding by the states is very rarely taken into consideration by the corporate media when they address the problems of school performance.

A new initiative of the Obama administration is "Race to the Top," a national education policy which encourages the charterization of public schools. In Michigan, the legislative body in the capital of Lansing passed a major education reform bill that was a prerequisite to receiving \$400 million in federal funding under the Obama administration.

Highlights of the recent legislation, which was rushed through to meet an end-of-2009 deadline, include the expansion of what is called "high-quality charter schools." The state is given the green light to take over up to 5 percent of schools that are labeled as performing poorly. In addition, the new so-called reform legislation allows some professionals to gain teaching certification without training in education, and it allows school districts to give merit pay to teachers using federally mandated school performance standards. (Detroit Free Press, Dec. 20)

Unions representing school educators have opposed this new legislation, saying that it undermines their collective bargaining rights and capacity to win decent contracts for teachers. "This strips employees of their voice in helping students in these struggling schools," said Doug Pratt, spokesperson for the Michigan Education Association. "It is completely inappropriate." (DFP, Dec. 20)

As this federal money was being offered, education funding in Michigan was slashed by \$350 million for the 2009-10 fiscal year. These cuts not only impact Detroit — with its more than 80 percent African-American population — but also the suburban communities, which are being forced to lay off teachers, cut pay, close schools and eliminate academic and sports programs to address the loss of funding.

School districts outside Detroit, including Dearborn, Highland Park, Livonia, Bloomfield Township, Southfield and Lathrup Village, have been forced to

#### BRONX, NEW YORK

## Activists score victory over billionaire mayor

New York's billionaire Mayor Mike Bloomberg and his friends at The Related Companies L.P. were upset Dec. 21 by a 49-1 override of Bloomberg's veto of an earlier vote by the New York City Council, which had rejected Related Companies' attempt to create a monster-mall out of the 560,000-square-foot Kingsbridge Armory in the Bronx, N.Y.

A concerted effort by a coalition of religious, community and labor organizations known as the Kingsbridge Area Redevelopment Alliance influenced Bronx elected officials and the New York City Council to support demands for living-wage jobs and to block \$18 million in tax subsidies for a megamarket that would drive out neighborhood supermarkets with union jobs.

The battle has heightened community awareness of the cynical relationships which bind City Hall to Wall Street and vulture capital-

make recommendations that will close buildings, lay off educators and eliminate transportation for students. Thousands of parents have rallied at school board meetings in these communities to demand that cuts be halted. However, school administrators and board members say they have no choice in light of the drastic reductions in state funding.

The Oakland Press reports, "The Southfield Public Schools 2009 Citizens Task Force on Declining Enrollment recommended a financial action plan to the school board this month that calls for closing schools." (Dec. 20)

Lathrup Village Mayor Frank Brock, along with Southfield Councilman Myron Frasier, co-chaired the task force and recommended that the district close Eisenhower Elementary, Leonhard Elementary, Thompson Middle School and Southfield-Lathrup High School. Students from these schools would be transferred to other buildings in the district.

#### Fight back program needed for jobs, quality education

Large protests against the cutbacks in school funding throughout the state have been organized on a district-by-district basis. What is needed is a broader program of struggle that can build coalitions across district lines and link the reductions in school funding to the overall economic crisis facing the U.S.

Recent meetings of the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions and Utility Shutoffs have discussed strategies to address the crisis. Last month, the coalition urged people to pressure Gov. Jennifer Granholm to impose a blanket moratorium on utility shutoffs for the winter. DTE Energy routinely terminates services for more than 150,000 households every year.

Upcoming actions include the annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day rally and march in Detroit on Jan. 18. One of the major themes of the 2010 MLK Day celebrations will be the need for a real jobs program throughout the country.

The coalition will take another delegation to Lansing for the governor's "State of the State" address in late January. The coalition is still pushing for a declaration of economic emergency in Michigan. The state has an official unemployment rate of 15 percent. But using the broader definition of joblessness, actual figures have climbed above 20 percent.

The coalition also wants to address the draconian cuts in school funding by working to build the March 4 national mobilization against the crisis in education ☐



ists. People remember Bloomberg's partnership with Brynwood Partners in destroying 135 jobs and a Bronx institution, the Stella D'Oro cookie company.

Ava Farkas of KARA was elated by the victory. She and others are optimistic that KARA will advance the struggle for development beneficial to the Bronx.

— Report & photo by Mike Eilenfeldt



## A view from Panama

# The last Yankee invasion: Dec. 20, 1989

By Olmedo Beluche

*The writer is a sociology professor at the University of Panama and secretary general of the Popular Alternative Party.*

Twenty years have passed since the bleak midnight of Dec. 19-20, 1989. Even the dead cry out silently to stop the world from forgetting them, pleading that their names be spoken and demanding justice. A fifth of a century has passed and the Panamanian people are still unaware how much damage was done to us. As with many other crimes in this country, the facts remain unclear, without any judicial inquiry, without any trial and without punishment.

What has happened to the North American invasion of Dec. 20, 1989, is the same thing that happened to that of Nov. 3, 1903: the Panamanian ruling class keeps the event in the dark, while the pundits try to impose a historical analysis that is diametrically opposed to the truth. They try to make U.S. imperialism's cruelest and bloodiest act of subjugation of the Panamanian nation be remembered "as a liberation," in the words of former Archbishop Marcos G. McGrath. In the same way they managed, with some success, to pass off the separation of Panama from Colombia in 1903 as "independence," although this act made us a colony.

One can approach the historical assessment of the invasion from two perspectives: either from the point of view of the invader's objectives or from that of the victims, basing the assessment on the interests of the United States or on those of the majority of the Panamanian nation.

As we have already indicated in Chapter VI of our book, "Diez años de luchas políticas y sociales en Panamá 1980-1990," ("Ten Years of Political and Social Struggles in Panama 1980-1990"), we must distinguish between the U.S. government's public objectives and its real objectives.

It would be naive to accept a priori the arguments of former President George H. W. Bush, in the sense that Panama was invaded to "guarantee the lives of North Americans and the security of the Canal," or that it was to bring us "democracy" and punish the "narcodictator" Manuel A. Noriega. Believing that argument is as



Panamanians say "no bases" at Dec. 20 protest in Panama City.

PHOTO: ASOCIACIÓN AMERICANA DE PERIODISTAS BOLIVARIANOS CAPÍTULO DE PANAMÁ

childish as assuming that Iraq was invaded in 2003 for the nonexistent "weapons of mass destruction," as President George W. Bush claimed at the time. Both son and father are proven liars and criminals.

In the aforementioned book our contention that proves that the North American objective was not to "liberate" us from the dictator was that on Oct. 3, 1989, when Moisés Giroldi and a group of officers staged a coup and arrested Noriega, offering him to the U.S., South Command troops looked the other way with contempt.

### Panama in the 1980s

In our view, the invasion of Dec. 20, 1989, cannot be understood without considering the dramatic developments in Panama during the 1980s, which can be summarized as follows:

1 The signing of the Torrijos-Carter treaties in 1977 opened a controlled and gradual process of democratization negotiated between the U.S. and the Panamanian military, which was to culminate in 1984 with presidential elections. This process was clearly within the U.S. foreign policy outlined by President Jimmy Carter to impose parliamentary or presidential regimes as the best form of domination, rather than the military dictatorships imposed during the previous decade, since some of them had resulted in revolutions as in Iran and Nicaragua. Since the Washington Consensus, these regimes combined very restricted "democracies" with the implementation of a drastic neoliberal economic policy of dismantling the "Welfare State."

2 The Panamanian democratization process was complicated in two ways: the death (accidental or not) of General Omar Torrijos in July 1981 led to a power struggle among National Guard officers; and a growing social resistance against the neoliberal policies that the government was trying to impose. So by 1984-85, under the government of President Nicolás Ardito Barletta born from the electoral fraud imposed by "an agreement" between the Panamanian National Guard and the U.S., the social and political crisis broke out forcefully, leading to the invasion.

3 Between 1981 and May 1989, General Noriega was the privileged ally of Washington, receiving political and military support to raise the Guard to a modern army in exchange for applying privatization and foreign debt policies in Panama imposed by financial institutions. The explosion of popular struggles against the government of Barletta brought the agreement between the two to a crisis. But the break between the U.S. and Noriega did not take place until February 1988, and even then it was not until the failure of the May 1989 elections that the Pentagon decided to get rid of Noriega in search of a stable political system.

Therefore, the U.S. invasion's primary objective was to establish a stable political system in Panama with a democratic façade that would guarantee the application of the neoliberal policies which were its priority. The same process was carried out in Mexico with Salinas de Gortari, in Peru with Alberto Fujimori and in Argen-

tina with Carlos Menem.

This objective was corroborated in July 1990, a few months after the invasion, when the U.S. government made Guillermo Endara sign the so-called Grant Treaty (Convenio de Donación), whereby some millions of dollars in economic "aid" would be given in return for the application of a strict liberalization and privatization plan dictated by the IMF and the World Bank, as the text of the treaty itself states.

From this political and economic point of view, the U.S. invasion succeeded in achieving its goals. The regime's democratic appearance allowed the successive governments of Endara, Pérez Balladares, Moscoso and Martín Torrijos to thoroughly apply neoliberal policies. And it was not until the elections in 2009 that this regime and its policies began to show certain cracks, influenced by the global debacle of the neoliberal model.

We pointed out in our 1994 book mentioned above that another of the objectives could be related to the Canal's reversion to Panamanian hands and the closure of military bases starting in 2000. In this respect, it would give the impression that we were mistaken, because the military bases were closed and the Canal returned as the Torrijos-Carter Treaty established.

However, favoring our argument is that though the U.S. government withdrew its troops at the beginning of the 21st century as was agreed, it took certain safeguards: a constitutional reform and an organic law that turned the management of the Canal into a "zone" under an administration in which users (the main user remains the U.S.) and financial elites have more control than the Panamanian people.

### U.S. military bases

Regarding military bases, it is known that the attempt to maintain the Howard base under the excuse of "fighting drug trafficking" failed, but this deficit was adjusted by agreements such as Salas-Beker, which authorizes U.S. military units to take custody of our seas and our borders. Until now, in the second half of 2009, and in the framework of the installation of seven [U.S.] military bases in Colombia, the new government of Ricardo Martinelli has started the installation of four military bases on Panamanian territory (this could

# Hands off Victor Toro, no defamation of MIR

By Teresa Gutierrez

On Jan. 11 the case of Victor Toro for political asylum will be heard in Federal Court in New York. Supporters are urged to attend the hearing from 12 noon to 1 p.m. at 26 Federal Plaza.

In 2007 Toro, a longtime revolutionary activist living in the Bronx, was racially profiled while riding an Amtrak train in upstate New York. He was detained by Department of Homeland Security Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents and issued a deportation order. Because he came to the U.S. seeking asylum, Toro is undocumented.

At his last court hearing in August, the U.S. Justice Department took a dangerous twist on the case and brought up Toro's political affiliation with the MIR in Chile. The MIR (Movimiento of the Revolutionary Left) is well-known and respected not only by revolutionaries in Chile and Latin



Victor Toro

PHOTO: NEXT LEFT NOTES

America but throughout the world.

The MIR helped lead a phenomenal and dynamic class struggle in Chile, especially in the early 1970s, and was part of the left movement of the period that had a clear class orientation and fought for the emancipation of the oppressed and working class.

Sept. 11, 1973, will forever be etched in the minds of the Chilean people. A fascist coup

massacred tens of thousands of people as it overturned the pro-socialist government of President Salvador Allende. Within a few days, a U.S. puppet regime headed by the monstrous butcher Gen. Augusto Pinochet took over, making the name Pinochet synonymous with terror.

U.S. imperialism was decisive in bringing about this terror reign and instrumental in the defeat of the Allende gov-

ernment, leading to the murders and disappearances. MIR was essential in staying the hand of the fascists for a very long time but fell victim to the countless tortures and assassinations. U.S. imperialism and the fascist Pinochet regime were eventually able to defeat the revolutionary working-class movement.

Toro, a MIR founder, was forced into exile after the coup. He and his spouse Nieves Ayress, also a leader and freedom fighter brutally tortured by Pinochet's police, made their home in the Bronx, where they have a family and deep roots in the community. Their extended family includes revolutionary artists Rebel Díaz, who have dedicated their efforts to demand political asylum for Toro.

Both Toro and Ayress have been organizing for decades and head La Peña del Bronx, a multi-issue fightback organization. They are also active leaders in the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights.

Victor Toro's support committee is demanding political asylum. His lawyer, Carlos Moreno, argues that much of the

Pinochet regime still lingers in Chile and deportation could lead to Toro's execution. The Aug. 26 DHS brief argued that Toro is linked to a "terrorist" organization — the MIR. Moreno argues that now it will be much more difficult for an immigration judge to counter the "terrorism" charge and grant political asylum.

Toro is surprisingly elated by this turn, saying, "If the U.S. government wants to put the MIR on trial, this gives us the opportunity to put the role of U.S. imperialism in Chile on trial."

The Committee to Defend Victor Toro urges everyone to attend the hearing on Jan. 11. Toro is not just another migrant the U.S. wants to suppress and deport. His case highlights the right to fight back against exploitation and imperialism.

A victory for the U.S. in this case would send an ominous message to the people of Honduras, Venezuela, Haiti, the Philippines and elsewhere: Dare to struggle and you will suffer imperialism's wrath.

For information on supporting Toro, visit [www.may1.info](http://www.may1.info) or call 212-633-6646.



reach 11 bases, according to Minister José Mulino), with U.S. funding and advice.

From the perspective of the victims, we reiterate what was said in our book, “La verdad sobre la invasion” (“The Truth About the Invasion”): “In a single night U.S. troops killed 100 times more Panamanians than in over 21 years of military rule. In a single week there were 100 times more political prisoners than there were during the five years of the Noriega regime.”

Despite the absence of an official investigation, the Catholic Church was able to gather the names of about 500 people killed, most of them civilians. The common graves of El Chorrillo, Corozal, Arco Iris and Chepo continue unopened. Between 18,000 and 20,000 people lost their homes that night. Human rights organizations counted at least 2,000 wounded. A fact that many do not know is that about 5,000 political arrests were made. Material losses, particularly those of the Panamanian state, have yet to be added, although the Chamber of Commerce quantified their losses as \$400 million, without including two years of economic sanctions that caused a 16-percent drop in GDP.

Twenty years later, when it seemed that justice was being done through the passage of a law in the National Assembly in December 2007 to establish the demanded National Mourning Day and an Investigative Commission, it was vetoed later by President Martín Torrijos, while the elected deputies who proposed the law did nothing to insist it be passed.

In conclusion, until now the historical balance remains favorable to the perpetrators and unfavorable to the victims. In the hopes that sooner rather than later, a new generation of Panamanians will erect a government that vindicates the memory of the martyrs of Dec. 20, 1989, our small contribution to the justice these dead demand is to bring the truth into the open. □

**ALBA**

# ‘Concrete projects with concrete results’

*The Sixth U.S./Cuba/Venezuela/North America Conference held in Tijuana, Mexico, Dec. 4-6 discussed the effects of the global capitalist economic crisis and struggles in response by working-class and oppressed people and organizations in various countries throughout the Americas. Following are excerpts from a talk given by Carmen Godínez from the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) International Department explaining the history and significance of ALBA, the Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples of America. The original talk was presented in Spanish with a PowerPoint presentation and was translated by Mike Martinez of FIST — Fight Imperialism, Stand Together. The audio tape was transcribed by Cheryl LaBash and John Parker.*

The people of “Our America” are using a new integration to come out of this global crisis and improve the living conditions of workers: the Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples of America.

ALBA’s objective is to transform Latin American societies by making them more just, cultured, participatory and in solidarity through an integrated process that assures the elimination of social inequalities and improves the quality of life and the effective participation of the peoples to shape their own destiny.

Both Hugo Chávez and Fidel Castro signed the declaration that created the [originally named] Bolivarian Alternative

of the Americas on Dec. 14, 2004, at the celebration of the 180th anniversary of the glorious victory of Ayacucho [the day Simón Bolívar’s army won independence from Spain — WW].

Only integration based on cooperation, solidarity and common will to advance through all of the levels of development can satisfy the needs and wants of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean and preserve their independence, sovereignty and identity.

But the U.S. imperialists are using such tactics as the coup in Honduras to stop the growing resistance in Latin America. For the same reason today there are seven new U.S. military bases in Colombia. The bases don’t only represent a threat to our neighbor Venezuela and to the people of Colombia, but they are a threat to all of Latin America.

This is why the ALBA integration is important. It can help construct a political and economic unity of our people and also defend the independence and sovereignty of each one of our homelands.

The free trade agreements that the U.S. and Europe want to impose on Latin America will suck away all the resources of our countries. ALBA is a trade agreement that mutually benefits all parties based on the strengths and weaknesses of each of the members.

In 2006 Bolivia signed on. On Jan. 10, 2007, Nicaragua joined with the inauguration of President Daniel Ortega. The integration among all of these countries began

Carmen Godínez in Tijuana.



WWW PHOTO: BOB MCCUBBIN

to take shape.

In the process of development of our countries we initiated great national projects with literacy campaigns, cultural campaigns, advances in telecommunications, health and nutrition and efforts to reach a sustainable level of food production and to create a sustainable system of production and job creation for those who grow our food.

At the sixth summit of ALBA Dominica joined. The ALBA bank was founded to help fund the different development projects in our countries and allow us to be independent from such institutions as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank and other global institutions that were exploiting us.

In April 2008 ALBA instituted a special plan for food production paying attention to the rise in food prices. It joined the international denunciation of the separatist attempt to divide Bolivia.

On August 25, 2008, Honduras joined ALBA, something for which the U.S. has never forgiven Zelaya. It is important for us to understand why there was a coup in Honduras. This agreement identified strategic development lines among our countries to support Honduras with the

*Continued on page 8*

## The struggle continues

# Worldwide campaign reduces sentences for Cuban heroes

By Cheryl LaBash and Alicia Jrapko

In the Miami courtroom where they were unjustly convicted, extreme prison terms for three of the Cuban Five -- including two with life-plus-years -- were reduced to the sentencing guideline minimums. To protect their homeland, the Cuban Five conducted observations of Florida-based paramilitary organizations planning attacks on Cuba

The Five were convicted in a Miami trial that even U.S. judges termed “a perfect storm of prejudice,” sparking a broad active international campaign to free them.

The U.S. government continues to prevent family visits by denying visas for Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez, spouses of René González and Gerardo Hernández, imposing additional extrajudicial punishment and hardship on their families. A double life sentence for Gerardo Hernández was not modified.

In a statement on their resentencing, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and Ramón Labañino said: “While still facing long imprisonment, it is significant that the U.S. government, for the first time in 11 years, was obliged to recognize

that we did not cause any damage to its national security.

“Also, for the first time, the prosecutor publicly recognized the existence of a strong international movement in support of our immediate freedom, a movement that affects the image of the U.S. judicial system in the eyes of the international community. Once again the absolute political character of this process is confirmed.

“We, the Five, are punished for accusations that never have been proved. Although three of our sentences were partially reduced, the injustice remains for all of us.”

Just days before the resentencing hearing for Fernando González and Ramón Labañino, an international event supporting the Cuban Five took place in the Mexican city of Tijuana, the largest border entry point into the U.S.

The Dec. 4 event opened the Sixth Cuba/Venezuela/Mexico/North American Labor Conference, organized by the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange, which brought together union representatives from Latin America, the Philippines, Canada and the U.S.

The Cuban Five solidarity event started with messages of solidarity from the families of the Cuban Five and an update of the case by Silvia García, representing the Cuban National Assembly of the Peoples Power. Carmen Godínez from the Confederation of Cuban Workers (CTC) talked about the support for the Cuban Five within the organized labor movements worldwide. Claudia Morcom, a retired Michigan judge, showed how the compelling story of the Cuban Five sparked a community art project by an internationally known Detroit artist.

Alicia Jrapko from the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five presented a short video featuring Alice Walker that brought tears to the eyes of many in the audience. Jrapko talked about the expanding worldwide solidarity campaign to free the Cuban Five heroes as well as the struggle to gain visitation rights for their spouses.

The event received considerable media coverage that helped raise awareness about the case of the Cuban Five, including interviews on four radio stations and three television channels. On Dec. 3 a press conference held in Mexicali, Mexico, brought the information to a wide audience in cities across Baja California as well as on the other side of the border. KPFFK Pacifica in Los Angeles featured a program with updates on the case and announced the events in Tijuana.

Two Mexican members of the International Commission for the Right of Family Visits, Cuauhtémoc Amescua Dromundo, professor of Political Sciences of the Autonomous University of Mexico and Hilda Venegas Negrete, sent solidarity messages to the event. Venegas, a member of the National Council of the Union of Jurists of Mexico and the League for the Defense of Human Rights, concluded her message with a saying from a sacred book of the Mayan people, “They ripped out our fruits, they cut off our branches, they burned out the trunks of our trees, but they could not kill our roots.”

The Tijuana event for the Cuban Five was organized by the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange and the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five. Visit [www.thecuban5.org](http://www.thecuban5.org). □

## Coping with global crisis

# Cuba’s humane policy

Where in the world today is unemployment only 1.8 percent, and every 2009 student graduate found a job? “In Cuba,” reported Raymundo Navarro of the International Department of the Confederation of Cuban Workers (Central Trabajadores de Cuba) at a labor conference in Tijuana, Mexico, on Dec. 5.

Yet Cuba’s socialist economy is not isolated from the effects of the global capitalist economic crisis. The price of Cuba’s main exports, sugar and nickel, plummeted disastrously while the price of food imports spiked.

Sugar production for export became so impractical when the international price of sugar dropped to two-tenths of a cent per pound that most of the sugar mills were closed, ending 150,000 jobs. A workers’ study program originally proposed by former president Fidel Castro continues to offer displaced workers 100 percent of their current pay rate while they train for another trade or even decide to enroll in the university, Navarro explained.

In 2009, 186,000 students graduated. Navarro commented, “We openly challenge the bootlickers and imperialists to find one of those students who didn’t get a job — not one could they find. The unemployment level in Cuba is 1.8 percent despite the economy.”

Moreover, not one of those Cuban graduates is weighed down with student loan debt either as all education in Cuba is free.

In a capitalist economy, the only investment worth making is the investment that will bring the highest profit. Investing in human development — especially in the era of a “jobless” capitalist economic recovery — is a liability for the corporations, not an asset.

In socialist Cuba where gains and losses are shared by all, the development of human potential benefits all of society and is valued as an asset no matter the cost. That’s how and why the Cubans do it.

— Cheryl LaBash



## New York

# Philippine struggle featured at forum

*The following excerpts are from a Nov. 27 talk entitled “The structure of reactionary violence and human rights violations in the Philippines” written by Professor Jose Maria Sison, chairperson of the International League of Peoples’ Struggle. Sison’s remarks were read by Bernadette Ellorin, chair of BAYAN-USA, at a Dec. 18 Workers World Party forum in New York. Gary Labao, also a BAYAN-USA member, narrated a slide show on the history of U.S. imperialist domination of the Philippines and mass resistance to it. View Ellorin and Labao’s remarks at [www.workers.tv](http://www.workers.tv).*



Gary Labao and Bernadette Ellorin at Dec. 18 forum.

WW PHOTO: JOHN CATALINOTTO

The International Coordinating Committee and all member-organizations of the International League of Peoples’ Struggle condemn with all their moral conviction and strength the monstrous massacre of at least 57 people, including many women and children, 29 journalists and two human rights lawyers, in Ampatuan, Maguindanao, last 23 November 2009.

The abominable crime against humanity was perpetrated by the private army of the Ampatuan ruling clan in collaboration with units of the Philippine National Police and the Philippine Army.

The Ampatuans are governors of both Maguindanao and the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao and include a cabinet undersecretary, congressmen and several town mayors. They have maintained their dominant warlord status because they are aligned with the Arroyo regime and have delivered to it large numbers of fraudulent votes in the 2004 and 2007 reactionary elections. Thus, they are allowed to oppress and exploit the people and crush with armed force any opposition.

But it is not enough to see only the relationship of the Arroyo ruling clique and the Ampatuan ruling clan in Maguindanao or even the rotten and violent character of the entire oppressive ruling system in the Philippines. The official designation and government financing of the Ampatuan private army as CVO and CAFGU paramilitary auxiliaries of the PNP and PA are in line with the national internal security plan called Oplan Bantay Laya. This has been designed and directed by the U.S. under its global war of terror policy.

The structure of reactionary violence and human rights violations in the Philippines has several levels, including those of the U.S., the puppet Manila-based government and the local tyrants like the Ampatuans. The U.S. has been the most culpable for whipping up state terrorism and vigilantism by local tyrants and by army and police commanders under the pretext of combating communists and Muslims who are unjustly labeled as terrorists.

The U.S. is the imperialist master that has dictated upon the Arroyo regime to adopt and implement Oplan Bantay Laya and use the regular armed forces, the police and the paramilitary forces of the Ampatuan type to suppress the national and democratic rights of the people. Along the way, the puppets use their armed power to intimidate and kill their intrasystemic political rivals.

The U.S. has provided the doctrine of warfare against the people and supplied the military equipment and training and other wherewithals of the reign of terror. It has embedded advisors, trainers and operatives within the reactionary armed forces and has deployed its own units in Mindanao and elsewhere to ensure puppet obedience to its imperialist dictates.

Together with the Manila-based pup-

pet government, local tyrants like the Ampatuans and all their military, police and paramilitary minions, the U.S. is culpable and condemnable for pushing state terrorism and the gross and systematic human rights violations and emboldening the human rights violators to commit their crimes with impunity under the pretext of combating terrorism.

### Further information on the Ampatuan massacre

In a land familiar to violence by foreign aggressors and local tyrants, the recent massacre still managed to shock and outrage the Filipino people as well as the rest of the world.

A convoy of journalists, lawyers and women relatives of Esmael Mangudadatu, a local politician contesting the governorship of Maguindanao Province, was en route to file registration papers for the May 2010 elections when they were abducted and executed by over 100 gunmen.

Twenty-four of the victims were women, some of whose bodies were later found mutilated. At least 28 journalists were also killed in the attack which the Reporters without Borders described as the worst loss of life in the history of journalism.

The perpetrators were allegedly led by Andal Ampatuan Jr., the mayor of a nearby town and son of the incumbent governor of Maguindanao, who was being groomed to take over his father’s position. He was assisted by senior police officials, local police and paramilitary forces that function as a private army of the Ampatuan clan. A backhoe registered to the provincial government was even on hand to bury the victims in pre-dug common graves.

Clearly the Ampatuans consider themselves untouchable because of their loyal ties to the incumbent President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, who has deliberately created a climate of impunity for human rights violators and mass murderers in the Philippines. Since her ascent to power in 2001, over 800 extrajudicial killings have been committed in the country, including 51 incidents of massacres victimizing a total of 255 persons. Not one person has been punished for these vilest of crimes.

In the case of the Ampatuan massacre, it took four days before the principal suspect was taken into custody and only after intense public outcry for justice. The Arroyo government’s initial response was to declare a state of emergency in the province which would be enforced, of course, by the local state apparatus controlled by the Ampatuans.

The Ampatuans are among the most loyal vassals of the Arroyo ruling clique and responsible for orchestrating the electoral fraud in the region through which Arroyo has kept herself in power.

It was Arroyo who gave the Ampatuan clan the authority to recruit and arm ci-

vilians to assist in fighting “insurgents” in the region. As a result, the Ampatuans now have a 500-strong army, which includes 200 special armed civilian auxiliary forces, as well as entire regular military and police units assigned to ensure the security of the clan members.

These local warlords and their “armies,” particularly in Mindanao, are not only interwoven with the national security apparatus of the ruling classes, they are also backed by the U.S. imperialist state, which has a special interest in Mindanao. The U.S. military considers Mindanao strategic for its force projection in this part of the world. It maintains military facilities in the island in direct violation of the Philippine Constitution. It has con-

## ALBA Concrete projects

*Continued from page 7*

goal of reaching energy independence and food security.

In Caracas on Nov. 28, the progress and development of the great national projects was reported, approving resources from the ALBA bank to initiate studies of the selected projects and to continue the literacy campaigns in Bolivia and Nicaragua.

Then in the state of Sucre in April 2009, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, islands in the Caribbean, joined ALBA. Fernando Lugo, president of the Republic of Paraguay, attended. The presidents agreed it was necessary for a new international economic order with profound changes to the international financial system to launch the SUCRE (Unified System for Regional Compensation), a regional currency that will include a common accounting system, a single system of reserves and a compensation fund.

ALBA has provided \$5 million to the literacy campaign in Haiti and a little bit more for its agricultural development. Development projects were approved in Honduras, Surinam, Guyana, Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Nicaragua and Belize. So the ALBA is not just an idea, it is a concrete project with concrete results.

### ALBA’s health results

In Venezuela since the project began in November 2000 up to June 2008 a total of 38,334 people received medical care including 8,797 surgery interventions and 1,889 youth under 15 years old.

In Bolivia the Cuban medical brigade has a total of 1,129 collaborators. Right now the country has 18 ophthalmologic centers that have allowed 271,398 people to recover their vision, not just Bolivians, but Argentinians and Brazilians, too. Bolivian students who graduated from Cuba’s medical program are working in conjunction

ducted at least seven military exercises in Mindanao since 2001, poured in millions of dollars in military aid and has trained local security forces to enhance “interoperability” with U.S. troops.

The USAID has funded tens of millions of dollars worth of infrastructure projects throughout the region to support U.S. military operations and U.S. investors in the region. To accomplish their objective of securing strategic resources, facilities and suppressing revolutionary and democratic challenges to U.S. interests in the region, the U.S. necessarily works with the local state apparatus and allies with feudal-fascist rulers such as the Ampatuans.

Given the intimate ties of the Ampatuans and other fascist criminals with the U.S.-Arroyo regime, there is no reason to expect that any fact-finding body or investigation initiated by the corrupt, oppressive and brutal government will be credible or will bring justice to the victims of massacres and other human rights violations in the Philippines.

The ILPS calls on all freedom-loving peoples of the world to denounce the Ampatuan Massacre and all other extrajudicial killings in the Philippines; to demand an independent probe of these killings; and condemn the Arroyo government for coddling mass murderers and human rights violators.

Stop the killings! End impunity! Justice now! □

with this program. The medical brigade in Bolivia has saved 18,326 people’s lives.

In Nicaragua there are 176 collaborators. Of those there are 41 focusing on eye operations. Fifty-six interns work with the project of the Latin American School of Medical Science that functions in eight municipalities of Nicaragua. They have set up two camp hospitals. In the technical activities we give aid especially for the diseases of AIDS and tuberculosis.

### Education

Today 24,703 Venezuelan youth take part in the new medical program studying in either Cuba or Venezuela.

A total of 1,663,661 people have become literate through ALBA’s efforts. On Oct. 28, 2004, UNESCO reported Venezuela free from illiteracy. On March 20, 2006, we began a literacy campaign in Bolivia. On Dec. 20, 2008, Bolivia was declared free from illiteracy. On July 30, 2007 the Nicaraguan literacy campaign “From Martí to Fidel” began. This year Nicaragua was declared free from illiteracy. The “Yes We Can Mission” began in Honduras and it has led to literacy for 84,942 Hondurans.

At this moment in Cuba 932 Honduran youth are studying, 397 of them in the Latin American School of Medical Science, 439 in the new medical program. The energy program in Dominica that was initiated in January 2007 concluded in 2008 with 137,679 installed units. The savings of oil is growing to \$1.7 million and the total savings amounts to \$5.6 million.

Today ALBA is integrated with the participation of nine countries: Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Honduras, Nicaragua, St. Vincent and Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda, Ecuador, and Dominica. But the benefits of this project reach all of the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. □



# To change the climate – change the system

By Sara Flounders

The International Climate Control Conference in Copenhagen, which was two years in the planning, ended in a train wreck. Nothing was arrived at: no treaty, no deadlines, no binding agreement of any sort.

For years the real dividing lines in this struggle were obscured by technical language and the most detailed schemes for reducing carbon emissions. But underneath all the debate was the class struggle in its most virulent form.

Based on intense U.S. pressure, backed by European maneuvers, the financial pledges to poor and developing countries ended as vague statements of zero substance. By the final day the commitments to strict carbon emissions framework dissolved into a “let’s all do our own thing” handshake.

President Barack Obama and the U.S. delegation called the conference finale an “unprecedented breakthrough.” Most other countries and environmental groups considered it a disaster. In this intense struggle two revolutionary leaders, President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela and President Evo Morales of Bolivia, sharpened the debate by defining the real problem: capitalism.

The economic crisis that has wracked the global economy for the past 18 months has confirmed for millions of increasingly desperate people the inherent instability of capitalism. But Copenhagen confirmed in the starkest light that capitalism is a totally irrational system. Corporate survival based on the drive to maximize profits trumped planetary survival.

Now clearly the battle to save the environment means taking on these dinosaur corporations and the social system that gives them life.

The conference was a world gathering on a scale not seen before, meeting on an issue that all agreed was of the most urgent concern to all humans. Representatives of 193 countries gathered, including 128 heads of state. Over 45,000 delegates, members of the international media, lawyers, lobbyists and countless representatives of “special interests” of giant corporations gathered, registering along with thousands of activist nongovernmental organizations that focus on environmental justice.

Everyone agrees that cooperation is desperately needed on an international scale. But cooperation was impossible! The reality was that irrational competitive forces tore every possible agreement apart. The leaders of countries whose rulers serve a handful of powerful transnational corporations held the conference as they hold all of society — in an economic, political and military vise-grip.

## Repression and exclusion

In the streets outside the conference 100,000 people joined mass protests and counter meetings. In the largest police action in Denmark’s history, police used tear gas, pepper spray, mass cages, baton charges and mass preemptive arrests to suppress the voices of dissent. There were more than 1,800 arrests.

Inside the Bella Center, the United Nations suspended even mainstream environmental groups and barred registered delegates from re-entering the conference. Organizations staged a sit-in to protest their exclusion from the talks. African nations, joined by China and some other members of the G77 group, walked out of the controlled sessions as the issue of reparations was pushed off the agenda.

Every strong-arm effort was made to exclude the positions and views of those countries most impacted by climate

change and to place demands and restrictions on their future development. Big business in the rich nations used the conference as a cynical maneuver to maintain their economic dominance.

The U.S. has 5 percent of the world’s population and is responsible for at least 25 percent of greenhouse gases. From the beginning of this global effort, Washington has fought to prevent any restrictions or controls on its emissions. It has used its enormous political and economic weight in past international climate conferences to win concessions and exclusions.

Since the Kyoto Accords the U.S. had secured the blanket exclusion of its entire military machine, with its thousands of bases and installations across the U.S. and all around the world, its hundreds of warships, aircraft carriers and destroyers on the seas and its jets, helicopters, rockets and drones in the air. The U.S. also wrangled other set-asides in past negotiations. That all international maritime shipping and aviation — a major and growing source of carbon emissions — was also excluded also benefits U.S. corporations.

With its own military facilities safely excluded, the U.S. negotiators in Copenhagen upped the ante by demanding the right to set up inspections of all industrial facilities in China and all developing countries. This was of course seen as an attack on the national sovereignty of all formerly colonized and oppressed countries.

Many of the G77 countries, environmentalists and thousands of street activists were demanding reparations for the environmental destruction caused by major corporations in over 200 years of industrial development.

According to many environmentalists, developed countries should pay a climate debt of \$1 trillion a year to help reverse carbon emissions in poorer countries, which suffered centuries of deliberate underdevelopment, colonialism, racism and toxic dumping. This concept of “climate justice” was an accepted goal of all past climate negotiations. It was pushed off the agenda at Copenhagen.

By the second week, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s presentations in Copenhagen made it clear how much the U.S. was demanding and how little it was willing to give.

She grandly offered that “the United States is prepared to work with other countries toward a goal of jointly mobilizing \$100 billion a year by 2020 to address the climate change needs of developing countries. We expect this funding will come from a wide variety of sources, public and private, bilateral and multilateral, including alternative sources of finance.”

In essence this amounted to nothing except a possible \$100 billion — 10 years from now, with no specific U.S. commitment, except an offer to help raise funds. This vague financing package would be available only if all countries agreed to the U.S. terms. These terms included killing the already insufficient Kyoto Accords and all legally binding measures and universal emissions targets and replacing them with the fuzzy concept of “transparency.” This was the same package that President Obama offered two days later.

## Cap and trade — capitalist nonsolutions

The real sources of environmental destruction were not being addressed because the Copenhagen Conference had a profit-driven agenda. The big capitalist powers used the global warming consensus to justify a global multibillion-dollar scheme for trading permits to produce carbon emissions.

The major European Union politicians, former Vice President Al Gore and

other imperialist forces have long proposed creating a global carbon market with caps of total emissions, but which allows trading of emission rights among nations and industries. This is called “cap and trade.” With this approach, industries that produce high carbon emissions in the wealthiest imperialist countries could offset their extra emissions by purchasing permits from industries in the poorer countries. These proposals make permits for carbon emissions an important commodity that can be bought and sold.

In essence this scheme means that uncontrolled development can continue in the wealthiest, most developed countries by a system of credits or promised payments to curtail carbon emissions, while allowing the pollution that harms the poorest countries.

Many critics of these market schemes consider the proposals to be a recolonization of the global South. The basic proposal of a global cap-and-trade plan is a market-based approach that will do little to slow dependence on fossil fuels. It merely allows polluters to continue polluting and Wall Street traders to make billions of dollars in global offset markets and complex trading schemes.

“A Nov. 29 British Guardian article was entitled, “Carbon trading could be worth twice that of oil in next decade — Carbon market at the heart of Copenhagen Conference could be worth \$3 trillion a year.”

Wall Street is poised to make billions of dollars in the “trade” part of cap and trade. The market for trading permits to emit carbon dioxide appears likely to be loosely regulated, to be open to speculators and to include derivatives.

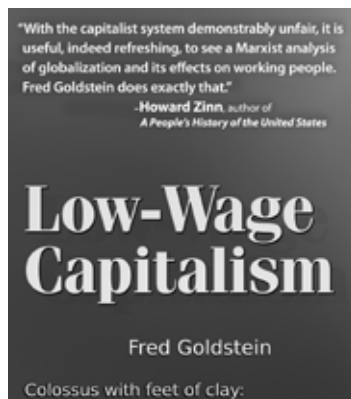
A Dec. 4 Bloomberg News article titled “Carbon Capitalists Warming to Climate Market Using Derivatives” shows the real deal: “JPMorgan, Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and Morgan Stanley will be watching closely as 192 nations gather in Copenhagen.

“Estimates of the potential size of the U.S. cap-and-trade market range from \$300 billion to \$2 trillion. ... Banks intend to become the intermediaries in this fledgling market. Although U.S. carbon legislation may not pass for a year or more, Wall Street has already spent hundreds of millions of dollars hiring lobbyists and making deals with companies that can supply them with ‘carbon offsets’ to sell to clients.

“The banks are preparing to do with carbon what they’ve done before: design and market derivatives contracts.”

Here is how Green Chip Stocks editor Jeff Siegel, featured on CNBC’s Green Week, posed the issue: “There’s no telling just how lucrative this market will become. Why else would huge companies like GE, DuPont, and Johnson & Johnson be racing to reduce their emissions? It’s because of the huge profits that stand to be made.”

This pro-capitalist Web site brags: “Here are some recent Green Chip Review issues our readers picked as their favorites: Investing in Water: An Ounce of Water, a Pound of Profits. ... The Hottest Stock Market on the Planet: It’s all about Energy and Minerals, and the Party’s Just Getting Started.”



The failure to reach any clear agreement is expected to deflate this latest speculative bubble for a time. An article in the Sidney Morning Herald as the conference closed was titled: “Copenhagen fallout: carbon trade to tumble.” The article complained: “The two-week climate meeting, concluded a day behind schedule, failed to deliver most of the improvements needed in the U.N. market, said Kim Carnahan, a U.N. emissions-trading researcher at the International Emissions Trading Association, a lobby group in Geneva. Its members include Goldman Sachs and Royal Dutch Shell.”

## Revolutionary challenge

Bolivian President Evo Morales explained the essence of the problem: “We cannot end global warming without ending capitalism.

“Capitalism is the worst enemy of humanity. Capitalism — and I’m speaking about irrational development — policies of unlimited industrialization are what destroys the environment. ... And that irrational industrialization is capitalism.

“The budget of the United States is \$687 billion for defense. And for climate change, to save life, to save humanity, they only put up \$10 billion. This is shameful.

“The best thing would be that all war spending be directed towards climate change, instead of spending it on troops in Iraq, in Afghanistan or the military bases in Latin America. This money would be better directed to attending to the damages that were created by the United States. And, of course, this isn’t just \$100 billion; this is probably trillions and trillions of dollars.”

President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela asked: “Can a finite Earth support an infinite project? The thesis of capitalism, infinite development, is a destructive pattern, let’s face it. How long are we going to tolerate the current international economic order and prevailing market mechanisms? How long are we going to allow huge epidemics like HIV/AIDS to ravage entire populations? How long are we going to allow the hungry to not eat or to be able to feed their own children? How long are we going to allow millions of children to die from curable diseases? How long will we allow armed conflicts to massacre millions of innocent human beings in order for the powerful to seize the resources of other peoples?

“One could say, Mr. President, that a ghost is haunting Copenhagen, to paraphrase Karl Marx, the great Karl Marx. A ghost is haunting the streets of Copenhagen, and I think that ghost walks silently through this room, walking around among us, through the halls, out below, it rises. This ghost is a terrible ghost. Almost nobody wants to mention it: Capitalism is the ghost, almost nobody wants to mention it. It’s capitalism, the people roar, out there. Hear them.

“Socialism, the other ghost Karl Marx spoke about, which walks here too, rather it is like a counter-ghost. Socialism, this is the direction, this is the path to save the planet. I don’t have the least doubt ... that’s the way to save the planet. Capitalism is the road to hell. ... Let’s fight against capitalism and make it obey us.”

*A complete English version of Chávez’s speech can be found at [iacenter.org](http://iacenter.org).*

## LOW-WAGE CAPITALISM

**What the new globalized high-tech imperialism means for the class struggle in the U.S.**

New book by Fred Goldstein provides an easy-to-read analysis of the roots of the current global economic crisis, its implications for workers and oppressed peoples, and the strategy needed for future struggle.

Available at [Leftbooks.com](http://Leftbooks.com) & bookstores across the country.



# Another kind of justice

When deputy U.S. marshals came to the Washington, D.C., home of Banita Jacks to serve her with eviction papers in January 2008, Jacks was arrested instead of being thrown out onto the street. The decomposing bodies of her four daughters, ages 5 to 16, were found in the home.

On Dec. 18 Jacks was sentenced by D.C. Superior Court Judge Frederick H. Weisberg to four consecutive 30-year prison terms, or 120 years in prison without parole, for the murders of her children.

Weisberg, who heard the case in July during a nonjury trial, denied defense counsel's pleas for a 30-year concurrent sentence that would have allowed Jacks to receive psychiatric medical care and eventually be released. Jacks had refused to follow her attorneys' advice to invoke an insanity defense during her trial.

Jacks purportedly "had been living like a hermit, with no electricity and little food." (Washington Post, Dec. 18) According to news reports, her home was "filthy" and "squalid." Six workers from the city's Child and Family Services Agency were fired because of the Jacks case; three have been reinstated to their jobs.

Prosecutor Deborah Sines opined in court, "These children were betrayed by the one person who's supposed to protect all of us: the mother." (Washington Post, Dec. 19)

In a tragedy like this one, it seems there is always finger pointing and someone to blame.

Karl Marx wrote that the prevailing ideas of any age are the ideas of the ruling class. The ruling class today, made up of superrich capitalists, militarists and others who support their system, always seems to want to blame individuals, a group of people or even whole countries. This keeps the capitalist system off the hook and prevents people from merging together in solidarity and unity against their oppressors.

But workers and the poor are the majority. We should refuse to be atomized and blamed when things go desperately wrong.

Banita Jacks was a young, impoverished African-American mother, possibly suffering from mental illness. We don't know much about her or her children.

But we can imagine a life like hers, because tens of millions of working-class women, men and children live with similar hardships.

You lose your job; or can only find a part-time job; or you work, but the pay is so little it doesn't go far. You have children and a family to care and provide for. You lack health insurance and pray you or your kids don't get sick or break a leg or have an accident. You have little money or few financial resources and you struggle to pay your rent or mortgage. Or you've lost that battle and face foreclosure and eviction.

Your children's schools are in shambles and more teachers just got laid off and the class sizes are growing, or your neighborhood school has shut down altogether. You endure and face down racism and/or sexism and/or lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer oppression on a daily, weekly, monthly basis.

You are not alone.

In the pages of this newspaper we have continued to report on and analyze the devastating impact the capitalist economic crisis is having on workers and oppressed people globally and especially here in the U.S. Often our coverage is from the frontlines of battles to demand jobs or income and free universal health care, to stop home foreclosures and evictions, to stop utility shutoffs, to fight budget cuts. These are life-and-death issues facing millions in the vast, multinational, multigenerational working class.

There is no sustainable solution to these problems within the confines of the capitalist system. Indeed, it is the capitalist system itself that generates and fundamentally causes these crises of survival. Only a system based on planning to provide people's needs — socialism — can turn things around and guarantee people's basic rights to all the necessities of life and fulfilling their human potential.

Then real justice will prevail. Then we'll see 120-year sentences meted out, not to the poor and oppressed who fill the jails and prisons in this country today, but to the bankers and mortgage lenders, the speculators and investors, the corporate CEOs and robber barons, and all the minions of capitalism whose actions and system have caused so much misery. □

## Long overdue step toward justice:

# Indictments in immigrant death

*Continued from page 3*

confrontation began when a half-dozen high school football players were heading home from a party and saw Ramírez and his white girlfriend, Crystal Dillman, in a park. An argument began and a fight broke out that resulted in Ramírez being punched in the face, and then kicked in the head while unconscious.

The teenagers fled the scene leaving Ramírez mortally wounded on the street. They then ran into police officers Hayes and Moyer, who were responding to a 911 call about the assault. As their luck would have it, Hayes was dating Piekarsky's mother, while Nestor was a friend of hers and Moyer's son played with Piekarsky on the football team.

The officers released the popular white football players, but later coached the teens about how they should give their version of events to authorities. The indictment says that Piekarsky's mother told other teens gathered at Donchak's house that Hayes said they needed to "get their stories straight."

### Pattern of police abuse

Nestor, Capt. Jamie Gennarini and the borough of Shenandoah were named in a civil suit filed in 2006 that alleged borough police beat to death David Vega, a Puerto Rican youth, in November 2004, and then hung his body from the bars of his holding cell so his death would look like a suicide.

# Workers World spreads around the world

## A message from Workers World editors

With 2009 coming to an end, we thought it would be a good time to bring our readers up to date on the success Workers World is having in spreading a Marxist outlook from "inside the belly of the beast" around the world and in many languages.

It's a few days early to really take a measure of how much WW's latest coverage of the Copenhagen climate summit has been sent around and picked up by different periodicals and their Web sites. But the article Sara Flounders wrote on the Pentagon's pollution has already been republished on globalresearch.ca and translated into Spanish for rebellion.org.

Abayomi Azikiwe, who also edits pan-africannews.blogspot.com for his long-time readers, wrote on the African bloc leading a walkout in Copenhagen. This article too has already been picked up by two or three friendly blogs and Web sites. Azikiwe's articles on Africa in WW have broadened their reach, along with deepening our coverage. In November, one on "The imperialist grab for Africa's resources" made it across the Atlantic to the New Worker newspaper in Britain.

Azikiwe, besides giving Workers World strong coverage regarding the African continent, writes about news in Detroit, a city that has gone from being the center of the automobile industry to the center of the capitalist depression. His coverage included the FBI killing of Imam Luqman Ameen Abdullah, with these articles picked up by Uhuru News, the San Francisco Bay View newspaper and Axis of Logic.

One of Azikiwe's articles, on "Municipal bonds and the crisis of the cities," drew a response from someone trying to maximize the response of the Black community to the 2010 census in the hope of getting more aid to depressed inner-city areas like Detroit.

Flounders' article on the Pentagon budget was probably the most translated of any WW article this past year — at least that we know of. Many of Flounders' articles are also published by globalresearch.ca, but this one was also translated to Spanish by the Mundo Obrero crew and showed up in kaosenlared.net; was translated into Portuguese by resistir.info and used on odiario.info and also published in the print edition of Avante, the weekly newspaper of the Portuguese Communist Party; was translated to French for the michelcollon.info Web site; and was translated into Japanese and distributed to anti-war activists there.

The county coroner's autopsy determined that Vega committed suicide since Nestor claimed bruises on his body were due to Vega resisting arrest. However, a second autopsy arranged by the Vega family confirmed he "suffered extensive, massive injuries consistent with a profound beating. ... The defendant did not die of hanging," the lawsuit said. (Philly.com, Dec. 16)

David Murphy Sr., who is African-American, filed another lawsuit against Nestor. Murphy was arrested in March on drug charges. His lawsuit charges that police refused to allow him to take a prescribed blood thinner, and that Nestor punched him in the back, where he had undergone spinal fusion surgery.

Murphy later started to experience severe pain in his chest and arms, and

### Solidarity with Honduras

Solidarity actions often generate coverage. This happened with John Parker's reports of the Viva Palestina trip to Gaza, which were published in addictedtowar.blogspot.com and the San Francisco Bay View in the summer; and with the articles by LeiLani Dowell on the solidarity trip to Honduras in October, which were republished on trinicenter.com and by the Singapore Democrat News, among others.

Larry Hales's insightful essay, "Tale of two cities in Pittsburgh," which was written while organizing against the G-20 summit in September, was republished by exchangemagazine.com, by islamonline.net and by michigancitizen.com, among others.

Considering the political ferment in Latin America following the upsurge of the Bolivarian movement, it is extremely important for a Marxist newspaper to interact with the large and active Marxist movement — made up of different tendencies — throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Through most of the region, this means a discussion in Spanish. Thus it is invaluable that the Mundo Obrero team of editors are each week selecting suitable WW articles, translating them into Spanish, and disseminating them to newspapers, webzines, blogs and political parties.

The MO editors have translated WW articles on the war in Afghanistan, on developments in U.S.-China relations, on the labor movement in the U.S., on the economic crisis, on the struggle in Iran and more, and these have been republished on influential sites based in Spain and in Latin America. Berta Joubert-Ceci, one of the MO editors, has had her own analytical articles on Honduras and on a big struggle in Puerto Rico republished on these sites after MO has translated them.

Articles on the economic crisis by Fred Goldstein, author of "Low Wage Capitalism," have been republished. These tend to reach an audience of communist and labor organizers as well as economists. When MO translates them to Spanish, as it did for a recent "Outline" of the crisis, it brought a positive reaction from a South American communist leader looking for educational material on developments in the U.S.

These are the examples brought to our attention or published on Web sites and other media we follow. We invite the use of our articles, and hope editors will inform us of their use. If readers know of other sites that are reproducing WW articles or have ideas of how we can reach out even further, please write to jcat@workers.org. □

suffered a heart attack. He stated that Nestor threatened to kill him if he filed suit. His lawsuit says that Nestor threatened that Murphy would not "make it out of the Shenandoah jail alive ... that he would end up like that Mexican who 'hung' himself."

"Police acted as feudal warlords in this coal town community that people were afraid of," said attorney John Karoly, who represents both Murphy and Vega's parents in federal lawsuits against the police and the borough. Karoly added, "The pattern certainly starts to appear that minorities took the thrust of their abuse." (Philly.com, Dec. 16)

Latino/a advocates who saw Ramírez's death as part of a rising tide of hate crimes

*Continued on page 11*



# After Copenhagen debacle

# U.S. China-bashing reaches a new low

By Deirdre Griswold

Ever since the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, which the United States never ratified, the capitalist political establishment in Washington has focused on one thing: trying to put the onus on China for the lack of any binding world agreement that could prevent catastrophic climate change.

The recent Copenhagen summit saw a repeat of this U.S. duplicity, despite the hopes of many environmentalists and poorer countries that the Obama administration would set a new course.

New Scientist, a British weekly, reported that the U.S. brokered a last-minute, nonbinding deal at Copenhagen that pushed aside the agreement, hammered out by the U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change, which would have set limits on emissions. Instead of signing a commitment to specific numbers, countries were pressured to be listed as “taking note” of the deal. U.N. sources told the magazine that only countries on the list would receive funds to cope with the impacts of climate change and reduce their carbon emissions.

“Western leaders,” said the Dec. 19 article, left the conference claiming to have secured “a global agreement to keep global warming below two degrees Celsius. But the deal provoked immediate anger for failing to include concrete measures to reach that target, and scientists at the talks said it would set the world on a path to 3.5°C of warming by 2100.

“The Western leaders responded to the accusations that the text was stripped of any concrete measures by blaming China and other developing nations for the failure of the Copenhagen conference to achieve more.”

For many years, Washington refused to acknowledge the impact of greenhouse gas emissions (GGE) on climate change, totally ignoring the warnings of climate scientists. The Bush administration, especially, was preoccupied with protecting the profits of the energy companies that hold such power over the levers of government.

Greenpeace in 2005 made public State Department documents showing that the Bush administration actually sent letters of thanks to ExxonMobil for its “active involvement” in determining the government’s climate change policy.

During this whole period, the U.S. was spewing out more greenhouse gases than any other country. Yet it said again and again that it couldn’t ratify an agreement like Kyoto. Why? Because while it somewhat curbed the emissions of the rich developed countries that have been responsible for the lion’s share of GGE, it gave latitude to those formerly colonized countries trying to overcome decades and even

centuries of underdevelopment. China, Brazil, India and Mexico are among the largest of these developing economies.

Because of this undeniable history, the peoples of the world rightly view the U.S. government as the main culprit for the probability that before the middle of this century, a “tipping point” will be reached that would make global warming irreversible and bring disaster to many nations.

**Deflecting world anger with lies**

At the Copenhagen summit, just as George W. Bush had done before him, President Barack Obama tried to deflect the anger of the world’s people by accusing China of being the stumbling block to a meaningful agreement. At the same time, he claimed “success” in pushing through the final deal.

What came out of Copenhagen, however, is nothing but a wish list. It is barely even a verbal concession to the 100,000-plus people who came to demonstrate outside, or to the 192 countries that sent representatives.

After two weeks of discussion and debates, the agenda was taken over by the imperialists, led by the U.S., and an agreement that scientists and economists had labored over for months was scrapped for a document that committed no one to anything. However, it dangled in front of the most impoverished nations the possibility of billions of dollars for green development — most of it beginning 10 years from now.

Oxfam, an anti-poverty organization based in Britain, warns that these offers are full of “caveats and loopholes.” It also estimated that even \$100 billion a year would amount to less than half what poor countries need to obtain the technology for green development.

New Scientist also reported that climate consultants say loopholes in the document “could allow developed nations to carry on increasing their emissions until 2020.” The U.S. now emits 17 percent more greenhouse gases than it did in 1990 — the benchmark year of the Kyoto Protocol, which called for developed countries to reduce their emissions to 5 percent below that year’s level by 2012.

The fact is that the U.S. has done practically nothing toward reducing GGE. This is clear when one considers the state of the economy today. Because of a crisis of capitalist overproduction, many businesses have closed down or curtailed their rate of production. Tens of millions of workers are unemployed and are cutting back on heating, travel and other energy-consuming activities because they just don’t have the money. U.S. corporations have been moving factories and jobs overseas in search of higher profits through cheaper labor. Yet emissions here con-

tinue to rise — proof that the government has done nothing meaningful.

**‘China’s investment in clean energy is extraordinary’**

In China, on the other hand, a country that just a few decades ago was deeply impoverished, much has already been done to redirect economic development. In the Dec. 24 issue of WW we reported on how climate scientists in the U.S. are taking note of China’s broad commitment to increased energy efficiency and development of alternate, nonpolluting energy sources.

An extensive letter from China by Evan Osnos in the Dec. 21-28 New Yorker magazine confirms this. Entitled “Green Giant — Beijing’s crash program for clean energy,” it tells how, for years, the Chinese government has been pumping billions of dollars into labs, universities and enterprises so China could assimilate the new technological revolution into its development plans.

“In 2006,” says Osnos, “Chinese leaders redoubled their commitment to new energy technology; they boosted funding for research and set targets for installing wind turbines, solar panels, hydroelectric dams and other renewable sources of energy that were higher than goals in the United States. China doubled its wind-power capacity that year, then doubled it again the next year, and the year after. The country had virtually no solar industry in 2003; five years later, it was manufacturing more solar cells than any other country.”

Osnos says that U.S. Assistant Secretary of Energy for Policy and International Affairs David Sandalow, who had been to China five times in five months, told him, “China’s investment in clean energy is extraordinary.”

But the U.S. State Department and White House, who crafted Obama’s aggressive strategy in Copenhagen, don’t know this?

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## After hunger strike

# West Saharan leader wins right to return

By John Catalinotto

After a 32-day hunger strike that brought her to the threshold of death at Tenerife Airport in the Canary Islands, Western Sahara leader Aminatu Haidar won the right to return to her homeland, which is still under Moroccan control. The Moroccan monarchy had attempted to expel Haidar when she was returning from the U.S. over a month earlier, but on Dec. 17 it had to concede to the Saharan leader’s courage.

Western Sahara had been a Spanish colony before 1975, taking over the territory as a result of the 1884 Berlin conference where the imperialist powers divided up control of Africa. In 1975 the International Court of Justice decided that neither Mauritania nor Morocco had the right to seize the territory, but that the Saharui people had the right to self-determination.

Nevertheless, when Spain was forced to give up its control of the territory in the fall of 1975, the Moroccan king seized control. The Polisario Front, a movement of the Western Saharans, has disputed Morocco’s rule ever since, waging an armed struggle against the governments of Morocco and Mauritania. Mauritania withdrew from its one-third of the territory, but Morocco took over that part. The armed struggle ended in 1991 with a cease-fire.

Haidar has been a leading spokesperson of the Saharui people’s continued struggle for self-determination. With her family and her political life back in the Western Sahara, she refused to accept exile and challenged the Moroccan regime by risking death in Tenerife. Thousands of people rallied to her support. Now she has returned home to continue the struggle. □

## Protest to demand end to one-year siege of Gaza

Last Dec. 27, the U.S.-funded Israel war machine unleashed a 23-day blizzard of U.S.-made weapons of mass destruction on the towns and refugee camps of Gaza, the most densely populated place on earth. The death toll was 1,500. Many of the dead were women and children. Tens of thousands lost their arms, legs, eyes, were paralyzed, orphaned or made homeless.

The United Nations Goldstone report found that the Israeli state had committed war crimes, but the U.S. government has blocked any international action on the report. Meanwhile the people of Gaza still go hungry, children are malnourished, the sick die from lack of medicine, and homes have not been rebuilt because of the vicious blockade imposed by the U.S. and Israel. This blockade is reinforced by the European Union and the U.S.-paid Egyptian regime. The Israeli Navy prevents Gazans from fishing in their own waters. U.S. Army engineers are stationed on the Gaza-Egypt border to detect and destroy tunnels that might bring medicine to Gaza’s sick and

food to Gaza’s children.

People from around the world are seeking to break the blockade. On Dec. 27, the third Viva Palestina convoy led by British MP George Galloway will try to enter Gaza with truckloads of humanitarian aid. Firsthand reports from the convoy will appear on the Al-Awda NY Web site at [www.al-awdany.org](http://www.al-awdany.org). On Dec. 31, the Gaza Freedom March will also try to march through the gates.

In New York City, on Dec. 27, Al-Awda NY — the Palestine Right to Return Coalition, the Arab Muslim American Federation, the MAS Freedom Foundation, American Muslims for Palestine, the International Action Center, the Jewish Anti-Zionist Network, the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, the Dec. 12 Movement, New York City Labor Against the War and many others will march to say the blockade must end, the flow of U.S. arms and dollars to Israel must stop, and Israeli generals and politicians must be prosecuted for war crimes.

— Bill Cecil



# Lo que hace China sobre el cambio climático

Por Deirdre Griswold

Después de una artillería propagandística emanada desde Washington y la prensa corporativa, la mayoría de la gente en Estados Unidos se les ha llevado a creer que el fracaso en alcanzar un acuerdo en la reunión de Copenhague sobre el cambio climático sería culpa de China.

Nada está más lejos de la verdad.

Primeramente, es Estados Unidos y los otros países capitalistas industrializados, donde la industria está creada para la obtención de ganancias, los responsables de la gran parte de la contaminación y la producción de los gases invernaderos que están cambiando al clima del mundo. China y otros países en desarrollo han contribuido solo una pequeñísima parte de las emisiones que ahora afecta nuestro medioambiente.

China tiene cuatro veces la cantidad de habitantes que Estados Unidos, y aún así, solo en el último año es que China se ha nivelado con Estados Unidos respecto a las emisiones de gases. Esto refleja el rápido desarrollo industrial de China al momento en que la industria de Estados Unidos se ha ido colapsando, trasladándose a otros países y dejando a los/as trabajadores/as de lo que fuera el corazón industrial, ahora convertido en un lugar en deterioro.

China es un país signatario del Protocolo de Kioto, el cual exige que todos los países industrializados reduzcan las emisiones de dióxido de carbono y otros gases invernaderos para el año 2012, recortes que serían un promedio del 5 por ciento por debajo de los niveles de emisión que estas naciones tenían en el decenio de 1990. Aunque participó en las negociaciones y obtuvo muchas concesiones, Estados Unidos rehusó firmar el Protocolo de Kioto. Según un reporte publicado por la ONU el 21 de octubre, Estados Unidos emite ahora 17 por ciento más gases de lo que producía en 1990.

Lo más importante es que China tiene una economía planificada, aunque sea una donde hay también un sector privado. En los últimos tres años, los planes del gobierno sobre el desarrollo económico para 5 años han sido integrados con metas bastante extensas y detalladas para reducir el consumo de energía, la contaminación y las emisiones de gases tipo invernadero.

Ningún otro país se ha comprometido tanto con el futuro.

## Edificio con energía solar más grande del mundo

Los científicos e ingenieros de China han sido movilizados para que encuentren



FOTO: CHINA.ORG.CN

El edificio de oficinas alimentado por energía solar más grande del mundo ha sido construido recientemente en China.

nuevas formas para conservar energía y obtener la misma de recursos renovables. De hecho, a solo dos semanas antes de comenzar la cumbre en Copenhague, el edificio de oficinas más grande del mundo con energía solar abrió sus puertas en Dezhou, Provincia de Shandong, en el nordeste de China. Este enorme edificio tiene centros de exhibición, facilidades para investigaciones científicas, reuniones y entrenamiento y un hotel.

Según china.org.cn: “las ideas verdes han sido aplicadas durante toda la construcción. La estructura externa del edificio utilizó sólo el 1 por ciento del acero utilizado para construir el Nido de Pájaro. El aislamiento térmico avanzado del techo y las paredes significa un ahorro de energía 30 por ciento más que la norma de ahorro nacional”.

Los avances tecnológicos desarrollados para este edificio estarán disponibles para otros proyectos.

China se ha convertido en el mayor productor mundial de paneles solares, superando a Alemania. También hace la gran mayoría de las bombillas fluorescentes de baja energía vendidas en todo el mundo.

Uno de los problemas más grandes de China en reorientarse para el desarrollo verde es su dependencia histórica del carbón. Según el Servicio de Información Mbendi, China es el mayor productor y consumidor de carbón en el mundo, y muchas de las grandes reservas de carbón de China aún no están desarrolladas. Cuenta con reservas de carbón de más de 114 mil millones de toneladas, 13,51 por ciento del total mundial. Es el carbón lo que ha impulsado el desarrollo industrial en China.

El norte de China, especialmente la provincia de Shanxi, contiene la mayor parte del carbón de fácil acceso del país y prácticamente todas las minas grandes en propiedad del estado. Muchas de las

minas pequeñas son propiedad privada y tienen un terrible historial de seguridad. El gobierno está ahora en el proceso de cerrar muchas de ellas.

¿Cómo puede China continuar desarrollándose y al mismo tiempo afrontar el problema de los gases invernaderos? Deborah Seligsohn, experta en energía del Instituto de Recursos Mundiales con sede en Beijing, dice que China es ahora “un nuevo líder en tecnologías de carbón limpio. Ha construido más centrales eléctricas de carbón de alta eficiencia que ningún otro país”, dijo. (AFP, 15 de diciembre)

Se ha previsto la construcción de más plantas de este estilo para reemplazar los hornos viejos y sucios en Shanxi. Es un ejemplo de cómo los países cuyo desarrollo se vio obstaculizado por el control imperialista, tienen que romper con ese vínculo y adquirir una infraestructura industrial básica antes de pasar a tecnologías altas y más limpias.

Aunque los políticos de EEUU están empeñados en criticar a China para cubrir la responsabilidad del imperialismo en el empantanamiento de un acuerdo significativo sobre las emisiones, los científicos del mundo más y más están rechazando esta evaluación.

## Científicos impresionados por las acciones de China

Science News, una revista semanal estadounidense de ciencia en su publicación del 5 de diciembre dijo, “Al analizar el porqué el Protocolo de Kioto no alcanzó su objetivo principal, realizar reducciones serias de emisiones por todos los países industriales principales, la mayoría de los analistas señala a los Estados Unidos. El tratado, que fue puesto en vigor el 16 de febrero de 2005, ha sido ratificado y aceptado por 189 países. El único país entre los que negociaron el tratado que se ha

negado: Estados Unidos”.

Añade que aunque los negociadores estadounidenses pueden ponerse de acuerdo con un tratado internacional, eso no comprometería a este país porque el Senado podría vetarlo. Y líderes del Senado en el pasado se han negado a ratificar cualquier tratado que no imponga reducciones de emisiones en países en camino de desarrollo como China, India y Brasil.

Sin embargo, China no ha esperado por otro tratado sino que ha iniciado acción por su cuenta. Science News entrevistó a Rob Bradley de la Iniciativa sobre la Política Internacional del Clima del Instituto de Recursos Mundiales en Washington, DC, quien está muy impresionado por los esfuerzos de China.

“Hace tres años que China se comprometió a reducir su intensidad de energía, o su uso de energía por unidad de producto interno bruto, un 20 por ciento por debajo de los niveles de 2005 para el 2010”, anota Bradley. “Comparado con Estados Unidos”, añade, “China también tiene objetivos de energía renovable y criterios de eficiencia de combustible para sus vehículos más ambiciosos. Y China también ha decretado importantes mejoras de las emisiones en 1.000 de sus operaciones industriales más grandes. Juntas, estas empresas son responsables de una tercera parte del uso primario de energía en China”.

Bradley dijo a la revista, “Si Estados Unidos dijera: ‘haremos lo mismo que haga China’, yo estaría muy contento”.

Bradley cree que China ha podido implementar ese profundo cambio en sus planes económicos porque “a diferencia de los creadores de la política estadounidense sobre el clima, que suelen ser abogados, la mayoría de ellos en China fueron entrenados como ingenieros o científicos”.

Esto trae la cuestión de porqué la mayoría de los creadores de la política estadounidense sobre el clima son abogados en vez de científicos. ¿No será porque están entrenados para fomentar y defender los intereses de las corporaciones transnacionales y los bancos que son los dueños de la economía estadounidense? En la República Popular China, aunque permite capitalistas, esta clase que explota no tiene el peso social para dictar la política del gobierno. □

## Libertad para los cinco cubanos

Libertad para los cinco compatriotas cubanos que defendieron a su país del terrorismo y que ahora están presos en EE.UU. por evitar muertes en la isla.



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Schwerert Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez y Fernando González Llort.

